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INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2183
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2302
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0834
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1579
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1937
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2358
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4789
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1448
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000640

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR G. GARLAND
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
DRL FOR K. GILBRIDE
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/29/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: YOUTH MILITIA FOUNDER DESCRIBES LEGACY OF
ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On July 28, Emboffs met with Prosper Izaya, who claimed to be among the founders of Zimbabwe's National Youth Service (NYS), the official name of the government's notoriously violent youth militia. Izaya relayed his involvement in NYS's inception in 2001, the first civilian attacks in 2002, the organization's expansion after the 2002 national election and his eventual departure for the teaching profession following the youth militia's violent role in the 2005 parliamentary election. Izaya went on to describe ongoing violence and farm seizures in his home area of Mashonaland Central, for which he holds Muzarabani South's ZANU-PF MP responsible. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) On July 28, ARSO and poloff met with Prosper Izaya, who claimed to be among the founders of Zimbabwe's National Youth Service (NYS), the official name of the government's notoriously violent youth militia (also known as the Green Bombers in a reference to their uniforms). Since 2001, the NYS has a well-documented history of perpetrating, with impunity, human rights abuses against civilians, including politically-motivated violence, farm invasions and torture. Over the past several years, the media and NGOs have accused NYS leadership of abusing its oft destitute recruits at NYS training camps, including providing substandard housing, employing food deprivation, and sexually abusing female recruits.

¶3. (C) After nervously requesting that Emboffs guarantee the confidentiality of the discussion, Izaya stated that he was heavily involved with NYS from its inception in 2001, following the 2000 parliamentary elections in which ZANU-PF faced substantial opposition for the first time. International observers reported extensive electoral fraud in that election. Izaya's efforts included the drafting of the first training modules and the intake of NYS's first class of recruits at Border Gezi training camp in Mt. Darwin, Mashonaland Central, approximately 250 km north of Harare. (NOTE: The naming of the training camp after ZANU-PF hero

Border Gezi, who, together with former War Veteran Association President Chenjerai 'Hitler' Hunzvi, spearheaded the use of war veterans and youth militia to inflict political violence, reflects the violent and anti-Western political ideology of the NYS. END NOTE.) Described by Izaya as youths aged 10-30 with little education who were seeking to obtain government jobs after their service, the first NYS recruits were trained for the express purpose of playing a role in the upcoming presidential election.

¶4. (C) The class graduated from training in December 2001 and was deployed with the intent of perpetrating violence against opposition supporters in the run-up to the presidential election. Izaya stated that he personally commanded a unit of youth militia who, in cooperation with Hunzvi's war veterans, carried out a pre-election campaign of political violence in Mashonaland West from Kariba to Kadoma.

The 2002 election was ultimately deemed not free or fair by observers, who noted pre-election and election day violence. Izaya then described his role in the NYS's expansion after the "successful" 2002 election, noting that the militia grew quickly from an initial intake class of 100 in 2001 to classes of thousands by the following year. ZANU-PF bases in towns across Zimbabwe served as recruiting centers and numerous training camps were established throughout the country, all with the goal of training youth militia "for use in the forefront of violence."

¶5. (C) Izaya stated that after the 2005 parliamentary elections, which were boycotted by a faction of the

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opposition and deemed not free or fair by observers, he became uncomfortable with the breadth of militia violence and left the NYS to take a teaching position with the Ministry of Education (he claims to have a degree in Sociology from the University of Zimbabwe). Izaya continues to teach in Muzarabani South, Mashonaland Central, but said he is no longer affiliated with the Ministry. Izaya went on to describe ongoing violence, displacements, and farm seizures in his home area, for which he holds ZANU-PF Muzarabani South MP Edward Raradza responsible. Raradza, a tobacco farmer and vice-president of the government-affiliated Zimbabwe Farmers Union, ran unopposed in the ZANU-PF stronghold during the March 29, 2008 by-election. According to Izaya (and multiple media reports), Raradza has orchestrated numerous attacks on opposition supporters and farms in his constituency since national elections in March. Izaya stated that following a recent police roundup of ZANU-PF thugs in Muzarabani, Raradza paid their fines and ensured their release, though poloff has not been able to confirm this. Izaya reported that some schools remain closed and many Zimbabweans in the area are displaced as a result of the violence.

¶6. (C) Izaya offered to provide further information on political violence and the NYS to Emboffs in future, including NYS paperwork and training modules (NOTE: It was unclear whether Izaya had access to new NYS materials or was offering only historical documents. END NOTE.) Izaya stated that as a result of his "position" and the political situation, he was concerned for his safety if the information he was shared was attributed. Apparently seeking some kind of Embassy assurance as to his safety, Izaya noted that he might be comfortable with the information becoming public "in the near future, once an embassy relationship was established." Emboffs stated that they could not provide such protection.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: It is unclear what additional information Izaya might have access to given his departure from the NYS some years ago. Nonetheless, his description of the evolution of the NYS demonstrates the systematic use of youth militias to control electoral periods and perpetrate violence since the rise of the opposition in 2000, and highlights the continuing importance of the NYS to the regime. Likewise, his reports of ongoing government-sponsored violence in

Mashonaland Central supports other reporting we have received and indicate the continuation of ZANU-PF intimidation tactics, regardless of recent good-faith claims by Mugabe administration officials. END COMMENT.

MCGEE